



## King's Research Portal

*Document Version*  
Peer reviewed version

[Link to publication record in King's Research Portal](#)

*Citation for published version (APA):*

Aradau, C., & Blanke, T. (2010). Governing Circulation: A Critique of the Biopolitics of Security. In M. de Larrinaga, & D. Marc (Eds.), *Security and Global Governmentality Globalization, Governance and the State* (PRIO New Security Studies). Routledge. <https://www.routledge.com/Security-and-Global-Governmentality-Globalization-Governance-and-the/Larrinaga-Doucet/p/book/9780415560580>

### **Citing this paper**

Please note that where the full-text provided on King's Research Portal is the Author Accepted Manuscript or Post-Print version this may differ from the final Published version. If citing, it is advised that you check and use the publisher's definitive version for pagination, volume/issue, and date of publication details. And where the final published version is provided on the Research Portal, if citing you are again advised to check the publisher's website for any subsequent corrections.

### **General rights**

Copyright and moral rights for the publications made accessible in the Research Portal are retained by the authors and/or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing publications that users recognize and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

- Users may download and print one copy of any publication from the Research Portal for the purpose of private study or research.
- You may not further distribute the material or use it for any profit-making activity or commercial gain
- You may freely distribute the URL identifying the publication in the Research Portal

### **Take down policy**

If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact [librarypure@kcl.ac.uk](mailto:librarypure@kcl.ac.uk) providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.

# Governing circulation: a critique of the biopolitics of security

**Claudia Aradau (Open University) and Tobias Blanke (King's College London)**

Suggested quotation: Claudia Aradau and Tobias Blanke (2010), 'Governing Circulation: a critique of the biopolitics of security' in Miguel de Larrinaga and Marc Doucet (eds), *Security and Global Governmentality: Globalization, Power and the State* (Basingstoke: Palgrave), pp. 44-58.

Michel Foucault's lectures at the Collège de France on *Security, Territory, Population* and *The Birth of Biopolitics* have offered new ways of thinking the transformation of power relations and security practices from the 18<sup>th</sup> century on in Europe. While governmental technologies and rationalities had already been aptly explored to understand the multiple ways in which power takes hold of lives to be secured and lives whose riskiness is to be neutralised (e.g. Dean 1999; Rose 2001), the translation of Foucault's lectures into English has rekindled interest in the relation between security and circulation, particularly given the intensification of circulatory movements under globalisation. Alongside sovereign exceptionalism and disciplinary normalisation, security practices increasingly took hold of the population and the processes of birth, death, reproduction or health. If sovereignty worked upon a territory and discipline delimited a particular space, biopolitics appeared as pre-eminently temporal, focussed on the aleatory, the uncertain or the event. As Mick Dillon has argued, 'Biopolitics is a *dispositif de sécurité* which secures - that is to say regulates, strategises and seeks to manipulate the circulation of species life - by instantiating a general economy of the contingent throughout all the processes of re-productive circulation which impinge upon species existence as such' (Dillon 2007).<sup>1</sup>

For Foucault, the *dispositif* of security is the institutional and discursive formation that has been deployed in the government of societies from the 18<sup>th</sup> century on. In the sense in which Foucault introduced 'security', the term referred to biopolitical practices of 'organising circulation, eliminating its dangers, making a division between good and bad circulation, and maximizing the good circulation by eliminating the bad' (Foucault 2007: 18).<sup>2</sup> Thus, the walled town of medieval ages was replaced by a town which made possible the circulation of commodities, people and even air. The transformation of town planning was paralleled by changes in law, medicine, commerce and other domains, which made the population the referent object of security and circulation its sphere of operation. The current concerns with infectious diseases, terrorism and migration appear nested in this modern imaginary of securing through circulation. What matters are 'unruly' movements that need to be prevented, contingencies that need to be preempted and good circulation that is to be fostered. From the governing of SARS, avian and more recently swine influenza, to terrorism and migration, circulation appears as the key

---

<sup>1</sup> Unlike the analyses of the biopolitics of security developed by Mick Dillon, Luis Lobo-Guerrero and Julian Reid, which focus primarily on the transformation of life in the governance of security, we are concerned here with the role of 'circulation' as the modality of governance for the biopolitics of security.

<sup>2</sup> Although Foucault reserved the terminology of security apparatuses to the mutation in technologies of power defined as biopolitical, in IR security practices have been analysed a co-extensive with governmentality in a larger sense (see e.g. Aradau 2008)

instrument and target of governing processes. Risks, insecurities and vulnerabilities are increasingly governed by orienting circulatory processes. The European Union, for example, could start new projects of 'circulatory migration' not as a tautological denomination but as a new way of securing migration by having migrants make a commitment to return home in order to be able to come back.

The publication of Foucault's lectures in French and their translation into English have also coincided with debates which have placed circulation and mobility at the heart of sociological research (Cresswell 2006; Sheller and Urry 2006; Urry 2007). Movements of people, ideas and commodities are at the heart of processes of government, as the 'territorial' paradigm of social research appears obsolete. The 'mobility turn' in social sciences has challenged the static sociological approach to spatialities of social life and argued for analytical attention to the 'actual and imagined movement of people from place to place, person to person, event to event' (Sheller and Urry 2006: 208). Although the 'mobility turn' has not considered security in particular, it has offered significant insights about security and circulation. The securing of particular mobilities heightens the immobility of others and perpetuates their exclusion. Towns, for example, have undergone further transformation from their 18<sup>th</sup> century opening to circulation, as the need to secure good circulations has turned them into 'airports', with all the surveillance and orientating technologies of the airport having been transferred to the governance of the town (Sheller and Urry 2006).

The dominance of circulation as a technology of security governance has also found echoes in recent political economy perspectives, which have argued that 'production appears to have been superseded, as the *fons et origo* of wealth, by less tangible ways of generating value: by control over such things as the provision of services, the means of communication, and above all, the flow of finance capital. In short by market and speculation' (Comaroff and Comaroff 2000: 295). In particular, the rise of financial derivatives and of speculative capital has led to an autonomisation of circulation from the sphere of production (LiPuma and Lee 2004). If industrial capitalism valued production over circulation, investment capital over speculation, and territorialised forms over other socio-political organisations, post-Fordist capitalism has reversed these hierarchies. While in Foucault's analysis, security instantiated a relationship with the future based on serialised events, on probabilities, for Lee and LiPuma, circulatory capitalism is built on assumptions of radical uncertainty and randomness. Speculation is a technology of 'taming' the uncertainties of the future, which is different from statistical prognosis and forecasting. As in globalised capitalism circulation appears to increasingly rely on speculative financial practices (Comaroff and Comaroff 2000), governing undesirable emergencies in the future has also become 'speculative' (Braun 2007; Cooper 2006).<sup>3</sup> The postmodern city has, from this perspective, become 'the site of multiple, transversal, and reflexive circulations that are variously and provisionally stabilized to engender the urban imaginary' (LiPuma and Koelble 2005: 154).

However, despite the analytical insights offered by these three approaches, none of them is well-placed to offer a 'critique of security' (Neocleous 2008) or, particularly, a

---

<sup>3</sup> Building on the model of speculation and gaming, terrorism underwriting has also attempted to transfer risk to the financial market in the form of catastrophe bonds (CAT). The most acute illustration of transferring risks to the financial market is the Pentagon's failed attempt to create a futures market in terrorism, the so-called Policy Analysis Market (PAM) (Looney 2003).

critique of the biopolitics of security.<sup>4</sup> As Jacques Donzelot (2005) has remarked in an interview about ‘governmentality studies’, the descriptions of liberal and neoliberal practices are undertaken at a ‘technical’ level rather than in terms of political stakes. The shift from the violent practices of sovereignty and the normalizing practices of discipline to securing circulation in the security literature similarly lacks a discussion of the political stakes of security. A critique of the biopolitics of security requires, paradoxically, a return to sovereignty and discipline to understand its exclusionary effects.<sup>5</sup> The biopolitics of security itself is not the locus of critique. This absence of critique is also notable in the two other literatures that have focused on circulation. If governmental analyses need to reintroduce sovereign and disciplinary power to account for the differentiation between good and bad circulation, the sociology of mobility similarly does not question mobility itself. Rather, it is the exclusion from mobility that becomes the brunt of criticism. The political economy perspective focuses either on the particular form of speculation that post-Fordist capitalism takes or on the stabilisation that hinders particular forms of circulation, but not on circulation per se.

To retrieve a critique of security as governing circulation, this chapter argues, we need to reinsert circulation into Marx’s critique of political economy.<sup>6</sup> This would allow us to understand, on the one hand, the limitations of an analytical approach focused exclusively on circulation and, on the other, the political effects of securing circulation. Although Foucault distanced himself from the historical determinism associated with certain strands of Marxism, he was nonetheless acutely aware of the role of capitalism and of political economy in the historical inquiries he did. His analysis of discipline and the mechanisms that separate and render ‘docile’ the dangerous bodies is inextricably linked to the development of capitalism in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. However, the biopolitics of security has not been similarly analysed. Despite Foucault’s reliance on Physiocrat readings to unpack these transformations, the relation to Marx’s critique of political economy has remained largely unexplored.

By placing circulation within Marx’s critique of political economy, this chapter shows how the biopolitics of security functions to obliterate the exclusions of production under capitalism. To this purpose, it proceeds in three stages. In the first section, it considers the Marxian influence on Foucault’s reading of discipline. In a second stage, it looks at how the biopolitics of security implies the rationality of political economy rather than a ‘critique of political economy’. The third section considers the implications of introducing a critique of political economy within the biopolitics of security.

---

<sup>4</sup> ‘Biopolitics of security’ was coined by Dillon and Lobo-Guerrero (2008).

<sup>5</sup> Hence the increasing literature in IR which has taken up Agamben’s re-writing of biopolitics as entwined with sovereignty and exceptionalism (Agamben 1998). As part of the process of governing populations and securing order, boundaries are drawn, creating categories of individuals who are to be protected at the expense of the exclusion and elimination of others. In IR, the war in Iraq (Diken and Laustsen 2005; van Munster 2004), refugee camps and airport holding zones (Noll 2003; Salter 2008), humanitarian intervention (Dauphinée and Masters 2007; Edkins, Pin-Fat, and Shapiro 2004), detention centres of terrorist suspects (Neal 2006), shoot-to-kill policies of the London police (Vaughan-Williams 2007) have all been recognised as exceptional practices by means of which some lives are eliminated, neutralized or reduced to ‘bare life’.

<sup>6</sup> Circulation is, after all, a political economy concept and it is perhaps telling that Foucault did not use ‘mobility’ or ‘movement’ as the sociological literature does, but has favoured the term ‘circulation’.

## Foucault, discipline and Marx

I quote Marx without saying so, without quotation marks, and because people are incapable of recognising Marx's texts I am thought to be someone who doesn't quote Marx. When a physicist writes a work of physics, does he feel it necessary to quote Newton and Einstein? (Foucault 1980: 52)

Foucault's relationship with Marx and Marxism has often been rendered as antagonistic and hostile. Etienne Balibar (1992) has perceptively formulated the differences between what he called Foucault's '*historical* materialism' and Marx's '*historical materialism*'. For Foucault, materiality is not the materiality of social relations, but that of power; and historicity is not that of contradiction but the historicity of events. While these philosophical positions appear to set Foucault and Marx at odds, many have also noted convergences and the possibility of complementary analysis between the two thinkers (e.g. Hunt 2004; Lemke 2002; Selby 2007). These convergences have become particularly prominent with the publication of Foucault's lectures on the rationality of political economy. Nonetheless, capitalism had been a constant reference throughout his writings. As he noted in *Remarks on Marx*:

the birth of a particular normalizing society was linked to practices of confinement, which in their turn were connected with a precise economic and social situation corresponding to the phase of urbanization and the growth of capitalism and with the existence of a fluctuating, dispersed population which entered into friction with the needs of the economy and the state... (Foucault 1991: 66).

Stéphane Legrand (2004) has recovered a Marxist approach informing Foucault's lectures at the Collège de France on disciplinary society (1973-1974) which had been largely expunged from the later published version of *Discipline and Punish*. The transformation of the penal system from the splendour and cruelty of sovereign punishment to the calculative rationality of discipline is focused there around a discussion of vagrancy. In Foucault's analysis, it becomes apparent that the vagabonds are not dangerous because they beg and introduce an unproductive element with the capitalist system of production. Rather, the vagabond appears as dangerous because their mobility has a negative effect upon the production process. Foucault reads the 18<sup>th</sup> century writings on the dangers of vagrancy as the 'fictive anticipation' of the mechanisms through which capitalist societies have tried to fix to their labour all those who had the tendency to circulate.

Legrand sets out to unpack this apparent contradiction between the Marxist approach that sees capitalism as liberating labour from earlier feudal constraints and Foucault's musings on the role of discipline in capitalist societies. In the earlier lectures on disciplinary society, Foucault argued that 'the coercive system is the political instrument for controlling and maintaining the relations of production' (Foucault quoted in Legrand 2004 translation ours).<sup>7</sup> The coercive system attempts to protect the means of production upon which capitalism depends; hence the increased penalty associated with

---

<sup>7</sup> '[le coercitif est] l'instrument politique du contrôle et du maintien des rapports de production'. (*La société punitive*, Lecture of 21 February 1973).

theft and damage to property in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. As the labourer is also a means of production, the worker's body will be at the centre of this coercive system. According to Legrand, the function of the coercive or disciplinary system is to produce the an-economical conditions of the economy. He quotes Foucault's observation on this point in the 1973 course: 'Discipline and punishment become the indispensable power relations for fixing individuals to the production machine and the constitution of productive forces, and characterise a society that we can call disciplinary' (Foucault quoted in Legrand 2004 translation ours).<sup>8</sup>

The techniques of discipline were therefore essential for capitalism and the organisation of production. Security in the form of disciplinary normalisation was harnessed to the development of capitalism. Capitalism would not have been possible without the insertion of disciplined bodies within the mechanisms of production. It had to turn peasants into punctual, efficient industrial workers. The coercive *dispositif* was to teach free labour discipline inside and outside the factory and to discipline labour into labour power (Melossi 2003). The disciplinary control of activity also involved a new conception of time, a time 'without impurities or defects; a time of good quality, throughout which the body is constantly applied to its exercise' (Foucault 1991 [1977]: 151). Not only did capitalism bring about a change from concrete to abstract time, it also needed to constitute subjects that would work according to the new rules of abstract time. As Marx argued in *Capital*,

It is not enough that the conditions of labour are concentrated in a mass, in the shape of capital, at the one pole of society, while at the other are grouped masses of men, who have nothing to sell but their labor-power. Neither it is enough that they are compelled to sell it voluntarily. *The advance of capitalist production develops a working-class which by education, tradition, habit, looks upon the conditions of that mode of production as self-evident laws of Nature* (Marx 1986 [1867]: 738 emphasis in original).

Just as the security of the Leviathan was not only dependent upon securing territory but also on disciplined subjects, Marx's and Foucault's analyses of disciplinary power show that capitalism was dependent on practices that secured the an-economical conditions for the development of capitalism. For example, Le Trosne, the physiocrat who wrote a *Mémoire on vagabonds and mendiants*, proposing harsh penalties for those whom he considered as enemies of all citizens, argued that convict labour could be used 'to stimulate circulation and life in certain provinces' (Le Trosne quoted in Mcstay Adams 1991: 40). In 1776, a police measure required that all workers possess a *livret* [booklet] which identifies them and registers the changes from one employer to another (Denis and Milliot 2004). Those who did not possess such a *livret* were by definition suspect. It was through such disciplinary measures that the conditions for the functioning of capital were secured.

---

<sup>8</sup> 'Le couple surveiller-punir s'instaure comme rapport de pouvoir indispensable à la fixation des individus sur l'appareil de production, à la constitution des forces productives, et caractérise la société qu'on peut appeler disciplinaire » (*La société punitive*, Lecture of 14 March 1973).

Therefore, the emergence and demise of particular forms of deviance is related to particular changes in the social and economic conditions in a society. While in pre-capitalist societies, certain illegalities like vagrancy were permitted and even supported by the population, starting in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the vagabond was depicted as the ‘enemy of the people’. The history of the dangerous and risky has been far from contingent. The referent objects of security have often included those who risk undermining the functioning of capitalism, from the poor to the vagabond to the contemporary precarious workers or migrants (Negri 2003).

Such an analysis of the construction of ‘dangerous others’ has been offered in Robert Castel’s writings on the transformation of the social problem in capitalism. While capitalism freed workers from ‘ties of proximity’, it also meant that workers became bound to wage work because they lacked any other form of support. As an ‘able body’, the vagabond who was not tied to any contract of labour, represents a scandal for the burgeoning capitalist order. There is no solution to the contradiction of the able-bodied vagabond who is enjoined to find work, but unable to do so. Vagrancy, argues Castel, ‘posed a major social problem because it was fed by the instability of the waged condition’ (Castel 2000: 524). During industrial capitalism, pauperism became the ‘social problem’ as it expressed a condition of mass vulnerability in a society where labour relations, in addition to low salaries, were defined by the ‘instability of employment, the search for provisional occupations, the intermittence of time spent working’ (Castel 2002: 221). Since the 1970s, the condition of danger is represented by the rebirth of what he calls, following Hannah Arendt, the ‘worker without work’. The ‘precariousness of labour’ today arises from technological-economic imperatives at the heart of modern capitalism (Negri 1991: 387).

### **From production to circulation and back again**

In the lectures on biopolitics and security, Foucault argued that a new form of power that has political economy as its rationality and has as its objective security functions through circulation. He draws on the writings of the mercantilists and Physiocrats in France to argue that a transformation was taking place in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Rather than based on the production of ‘docile bodies’, this new form of power does not directly target individuals. As elaborated upon in de Larrinaga and Doucet’s introduction, it works upon populations, in relation to events that could happen and whose contingency needs to be calculated and managed. The rationality of power shifts from the sovereign concern with territory to the biopolitical concern with population. Although located in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and also considered in opposition to the sovereign rationality of power, biopolitics, unlike discipline, is not focused on creating docile bodies. The sovereign concern with boundaries to be drawn, limits to be imposed and constraints obeyed changes to one of managing circulation by directing freedom. Thus, the biopolitics of security is focused on contingency and the management of events.

Foucault associated the change in governmentality with the Physiocrats’ writings. These are part of an epistemic change from the Mercantilist understandings of wealth and population. As their name indicates, the Physiocrats (*physis* = nature and *kratos* = power) developed a system based on the idea of an interconnected natural order. The Physiocrats attempted to ‘find a point of support in the processes of scarcity themselves, in the kind

of qualitative fluctuation that sometimes produced abundance and sometimes scarcity: finding support in the reality of the phenomenon, and...making other elements of reality function in relation to it, in such a way that the phenomenon is cancelled out, as it were' (Foucault 2007: 59). Unlike the Mercantilists, for whom state wealth resulted from international trade and finance, for Physiocrats agriculture was the exclusive source of wealth. Instead of imposing restrictions on grain trade, the Physiocrats argued, the state should allow the circulation of commodities, which would regulate prices 'naturally'. Quesnay, their most well-known representative, favoured free trade, the elimination of all internal and external barriers to trade in grains. He thought free trade would produce a stable price that would never be too different from that on the world market. The Physiocrats embraced the motto 'laissez faire, laissez passer', as the economy was a self-righting mechanisms and individual interest will create order and prosperity. Hence, policies of free circulation were in accordance with what they saw as the 'natural state' of the economy. This natural state was developed by Quesnay in his *Tableau économique*, which analysed circulation between three classes: the productive (agricultural class), the landed nobility and the sterile class (urban handicraft and small industrial production).

The Physiocrats advocated freedom for a large range of human activities, but these freedoms were not universal. 'Laissez faire' trade was also not universal, but only encompassed trade in grains, which favoured an agricultural nation such as *ancien regime* France. Foreign sales of grains prevented a fall in market prices and thus they could increase the net product and the nation's wealth. Quesnay was prepared to advocate intervention where he thought the private activities of individuals might harm the production and reproduction of wealth, as in the case of monopolies, the emigration of labour and capital, the excessive spending on luxuries (Dooley 2005: 88). Foucault also notes a change in the understanding of population in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. For him, the Mercantilists saw population as a productive force, while the Physiocrats were generally anti-populationist. Nonetheless, Yves Charbit has argued that the Physiocrats were neither populationist nor anti-populationist (Charbit 2002). For them, population was a dependent variable. Population growth was dependent upon the 'good price' for grains and the net product of agriculture, which ensured good wages for the 'lower orders'.

Despite being embraced by Turgot, the *Contrôleur Général des Finances* under Louis XVI, the Physiocrat policies were met with resistance and were soon rejected. The policy of free trade in grains led to riots in the streets and Turgot was removed from office in 1776, marking the 'abrupt end of physiocracy' (Dooley 2005: 90). Mercantilism was to dominate Europe for another hundred and fifty years. However, the political disfavour that met the Physiocrat policies is not considered in the context of the epistemic rupture located by Foucault.

Moreover, for Marx and other interpreters, the role of the Physiocrats has not been mainly understood in relation to their policies (particularly in relation to agriculture, grains trade and exports), but in relation to their contribution to political economy. What is interesting about the Physiocrats is their new theory about wealth, money and the state and the role of circulation. For the Physiocrats, circulation cannot be simply linked with commerce and the industry because they are opposed to these sectors of society, whom they see as the 'sterile classes'. Moreover, they need to counter the examples of England and Holland, whose richness is based on international trade and industrialization. They analyse the economy as a circular flow of income between economic sectors and thus



social classes which, in their view, maximized the net product. Rather than famous for inspiring and upholding particular policies on circulation, Quesnay is interesting for having accounted for the generation of wealth as well as for its circulation. In his renowned *Tableau économique*, landowners advanced capital to both other sectors, but in this agrarian capitalist model only the farmers returned it (to the landowners) with a surplus. Although he restricted value to agriculture in his attempt to support agriculture against the mercantilist support of industry and commerce, Quesnay realized that ‘value’ is transferred to commodities through production. In his essay ‘Grains’ for the *Encyclopédie*, Quesnay argued against the mercantilist theory of money as government wealth: ‘a kingdom can be prosperous and powerful only through the medium of products which are continuously renewing themselves or being generated from the wealth of a numerous and energetic people’ (quoted in Buck-Morss 1995). Circulation, on the other hand, cannot renew itself in the absence of production.

A century later, Marx would credit Quesnay with seeing that the birthplace of surplus value is the sphere of production, not that of circulation. What distinguishes Quesnay from the mercantilist theory of money is his understanding of commodity circulation and the relation between circulation and production. The Physiocrats set the basis for an analysis of capitalist production. In Marx’s reading of Quesnay, his *Tableau économique* acknowledged both the importance of production and of circulation:

Production creates not only articles of use but also their value; its compelling motive is the procurement of surplus-value, whose birth-place is the sphere of production, not of circulation. Among the three classes which figure as the vehicles of the social process of reproduction brought about by the circulation, the immediate exploiter of ‘productive’ labour, the producer of surplus-value, the capitalist farmer, is distinguished from those who merely appropriate the surplus-value (Marx 1986 [1893]: 364).

In his lectures from 1977-78, Foucault also notes in passing that Quesnay introduced the idea of production in the understanding of economy. However, circulation remains the defining element of the new rationality of power at the expense of production. The obliteration of production from Foucault’s reading of biopolitics is effected through a double move: first, through the temporal separation of discipline and biopolitics (although he acknowledges the various technologies of power can also coexist) and second, through the obliteration of production from the Physiocrat writings upon which he bases the analysis of the mutation of technologies of power. The next section considers the consequences of these obliterations for a critique of the biopolitics of security. To that purpose, it revisits Marx’s critique of political economy.

### **Critique of security?**

Foucault’s analysis of discipline and politics is located at the same temporal boundary: the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Although in his lectures on *Security, Territory, Population*, he distinguishes these forms of power as different rationales that have emerged at different moments in time, it is important to consider that Foucault’s analysis of both discipline and biopolitics is based on the writings of the Physiocrats. Rather than temporally

differentiated, discipline and biopolitics emerge at the same moment in time, in the conditions of the development of capitalism. This is apparent from Foucault's use of Physiocrat writings to read both discipline and biopolitics. Le Trosne in *Discipline and Punish*, Mirabeau and Quesnay in *Security, Territory, Population*, Quesnay and Turgot in *The Order of Things* and Turgot in *Madness and Civilisation*. At times, the same author surfaces in several books. In *Discipline and Punish*, for example, Le Trosne's *Mémoire* on vagabonds and beggars is quoted describing vagabonds as waging a war on all citizens. In *Security, Territory, Population*, Le Trosne is used again, this time for his writings on grains and agriculture and his argument that the state should ensure the liberty for the sale of what is produced (Foucault 2007: 57, 70). Why do the Physiocrats signal both a change from sovereign to disciplinary power and a change from disciplinary power to the 'rationality of power based on circulation'? At the same time, why does 'circulation' arise as the focus of security governance?<sup>9</sup>

We want to suggest, drawing on Marx's analysis of Quesnay's work in *Capital* vol. 2, that the Physiocrats' writings could be used to understand the mutation of technologies of power both towards discipline and biopolitics because Foucault separated production (and the approach to power as productive) from circulation (and the understanding of power as consonant with the 'natural order of things'). Unlike Marx's analysis of the Physiocrats, Foucault considers their policies concerning circulation without their grounding in a particular understanding of the creation of value through production. Marx interpreted the Physiocrats as being the first to have understood the role of production. According to him, their understanding was nonetheless flawed as they limited production to agriculture only.

For Marx, commodity circulation is the formal precondition for the circuit of capital, the real basis of which is production. The general formula of capital is M-C-M', money – commodity – more money. In the first phase the capitalist will go to the market to use his money capital in order to buy a new commodity that will later on be sold with profit. This process describes a capitalist circulation. In order to achieve profit, the capitalist will invest, meaning he will buy labour force and means of production to create productive capital. He will invest to create C', which can be sold as M'. M-C-M' is actually M-C...Prod...C'-M'. This means the process of capital includes acts of production and circulation.

Value is a relation of production and circulation and does not exist out of production only. Commodity circulation is only a moment of a more complex totality (Postone 1993: 274). Marx's *Capital* starts with the consideration of commodities, as the category of the commodity designates the 'social form of capitalist societies' (Postone 2007). However, as the formula of capital indicates, production is integral to capital, as circulation 'does not carry within itself the principle of self-renewal' (Marx 1993 [1953]: 254 emphasis in original), but is dependent upon the production of commodities. The simple movement of exchange values cannot realise capital, but it will exhaust itself in other commodities which will be consumed. Circulation needs to be powered, fuelled from production. It is production which presupposes circulation as its developed moment, while circulation realises the value that is the result of production.

---

<sup>9</sup> In an article on the limits of Foucauldian analysis for International Relations, Jan Selby has differentiated the Foucauldian emphasis on the 'how' of power from the Marxist concerns with the 'why' of power in capitalist societies.

Rather than emphasising circulation or particular forms of mobility, the argument we advance here is that security needs to be understood within the totality of capitalism, alongside production. Emphasising circulation as the technology of security governance risks effacing the role of production in the *dispositif* of security. Mobility needs to be understood not only in relation to immobility as suggested by the sociology of mobility and the governance of circulation not only in relation to the securitization of bad versus good circulations. Instead, understanding the deployment of the security *dispositif* requires an analysis of how circulation functions within capitalism in relation to production and labour.

By considering both production and circulation as part of the process of realizing capital, Marx was able to show that domination was part of the political economy of capital. Foucault on the other hand can only implicitly bring together discipline and biopolitics starting from the 18<sup>th</sup> century on. The difficulty of formulating a critique of securing circulation is the result of the very relationship between circulation and freedom, as both Marx and Foucault were acutely aware. For Marx, the sphere of circulation is the sphere of liberal rights, interests and freedoms, ‘in fact a very Eden of the innate rights of man’ (Marx 1986 [1867]). For Foucault too, freedom becomes detached from status and changes its meaning to ‘the possibility of movement, change of place, and processes of circulation of both people and things’ (Foucault 2007: 48-9). Nonetheless, in this rendering of freedom, there can be no critique of circulation, except for the effects that the political decision of what counts as ‘good’ and what counts as ‘bad’ circulation might have. Sovereign decisions and disciplinary normalisation need to be brought back at the heart of biopolitics in order to grasp its pernicious effects and formulate a critique. Circulation, with the apparent equality of exchange and the freedom of commodity movement which leads to price formation, appeared as a modality of justice (Foucault 2004: 32). For Marx, on the other hand, there is no distinction to be made between bad and good circulation, between circulation and immobility. Circulation is part of the process of capital realisation and in that sense it is neither ‘good’ nor ‘bad’. The domination associated with circulation emerges from the ‘hidden abode of production’. How different is Marx’s rendering of the move from circulation to production!

On leaving this sphere of simple circulation or of exchange of commodities, which furnishes the ‘Free-trader Vulgaris’ with his view and ideas, and with the standard by which he judges a society based on capital and wages, we think we can perceive a change in the physiognomy of our dramatis personae. He, who before was the money owner, now strides in front as capitalist; the possessor of labour power follows as his labourer. The one with an air of importance, smirking, intent on business; the other, timid and holding back, like one who is bringing his own hide to market and has nothing to expect but – a hiding (Marx 1986 [1867] Chapter 6).

The unequal social relations fostered in the process of production appear as attenuated or effaced in the seeming equality of exchange.

Nonetheless, Foucault’s insight about the predominance of circulation in security governance is right. Governing circulation is often the main focus of security apparatuses,

whether that means the circulation of data, people, diseases or commodities. Given the rise of capitalism in the 18<sup>th</sup> century – the cutting point in Foucault's analysis on discipline and biopolitics – circulation becomes predominant in security governance. Marx's critique of political economy can shed light on why circulation is insufficient in the analysis of security and why it has become an increasingly important mode of governmentality. In this approach, circulation has become increasingly important for security governance as crisis manifests itself in circulation.

If the flow of exchanges, of sales and purchases, is interrupted, crises happen. As Marx noted in *Grundrisse*, '...in the quality of money as a medium, in the splitting of exchange into two lies, there lies the germ of crises, or at least their possibility' (Marx 1993 [1953]: 198). According to Marx, in crises the 'intrinsic oneness' of circulation and production is broken apart and the two become autonomised. A crisis is a general disruption of the social production and reproduction process, of production and circulation. It is perceived as a negative, as a 'disease', as it is generally opposed to the targets of the economic process. The realisation of value in circulation is interrupted and the 'real economy' makes a reappearance after it has been hidden in years of celebration of financial services. The crisis involves both production and circulation, but it will appear in circulation when no buyer can be found to realise the produced surplus. That there will be a buyer is an assumption the capitalist has to make before attempting to achieve profit. Yet, as Marx argued, 'if the split between the sale and the purchase become too pronounced, the intimate connection between them, their oneness, asserts itself by producing – a crisis' (Marx 1986 [1867]).

Security governance focuses on circulation inasmuch as crises in capitalism are manifest in circulation. However, a critique of the biopolitics of security, we have argued, needs to consider both production and circulation as part of the process of capital realisation. Crises themselves have their roots in production, independent of their manifestation.

### **Concluding remarks**

According to Foucault, societies since the 18<sup>th</sup> century are secured through governing circulation. The biopolitics of security entails the differentiation and organization of 'good circulations' at the expense of 'bad circulations'. However, the exclusive emphasis on circulation renders difficult, if not impossible, a critique of the biopolitics of security. This is due, we have argued, to the extraction of circulation from the process of capital realization through both circulation and production. As Foucault separates production and circulation by proposing a 'double' analysis of Physiocrat writings to support both his analysis of discipline and that of punishment, Marx brings together the two. Unlike Foucault, Marx recognized the novelty of the Physiocrat analysis of the generation of value through production. Similarly, later interpreters of Physiocrat work have noted the interdependence between their policies concerning circulation and the particular understanding of production they had.

In order to understand what is at stake in the security governance as it emerged from the 18<sup>th</sup> century on, we have argued that it is important to consider both production and circulation as part of the processes of capitalism. Some of the ongoing debates on food security and food shortages are revealing for the limitations of considering the

governance of security just in terms of circulation or as a shift towards circulation. Particularly as climate change has gone up the political agenda, food security has followed in its stead, namely in relation to the countries in the South which are most vulnerable to climate change. Many arguments around food security focus indeed on circulation and the role of markets, the reduction of barriers to trade and ‘free trade’. Nonetheless, as a Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) report on the UK’s food security has noted, ‘[s]ystemic risks to food supply may not, however, be adequately managed by markets, either for domestic or overseas produce; these need to be correctly identified and appropriately targeted’ (DEFRA 2006: iii). While the UK government makes an argument about the limits of markets and circulation in order to advocate increased home production – more recently with the help of genetic engineering – political ecology approaches in geography have analysed famines and crises through the complexity of changes in the conditions of production. Michael Watts and Mike Davis have shown, for example, how changes in production are influenced by practices of circulation and the integration of the ‘Third World’ in global systems of trade. In the case of Northern Nigeria, the reproduction of the peasant family became dependent upon the production of export commodities (Watts 1983). Mike Davis (2001) has also shown how the ‘imaginary of the Third World’ as depleted place of starvation was created by Victorian imperialism and the restructuring of production and circulation. In India, for example, grains and rice were transported by road or canal from non-famine to shortage areas. The colonial introduction of railways led to the movement and storage of grains for export, while the telegraph transferred price information so that market prices were maintained in India. The colonial authorities also reorganized the production system to increase taxation. The political ecology literature has pointed out a shift in analyses of food security from the 1970s focus on food supplies and trade to analyses which emphasise the political economy of production and access to food supplies.

These brief remarks on the political ecology literature engaging with famines, food shortages and food security sets in starker light the differences between analyses which unpack the governance of circulation and those which consider circulation and production as phases of the realization of capital. While Foucault has rightly noted the prominence of circulation in security governance, the separation of production from circulation has limited the possibility of a critique of the biopolitics of security based in a critique of political economy. However, if the political stakes of security apparatuses are to be adequately appraised, a ‘critique of political economy’ needs to be inserted in security studies.

## References

- Agamben, Giorgio. 1998. *Homo Sacer. Sovereign Power and Bare Life*. Translated by Daniel Heller-Roazen. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Aradau, Claudia. 2008. *Rethinking Trafficking in Women. Politics out of Security*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Balibar, Etienne. 1992. Foucault and Marx: The Question of Nominalism. In *Michel Foucault, Philosopher: Essays*, ed. T. Armstrong:80-98. New York: Routledge.
- Braun, Bruce. 2007. Biopolitics and the Molecularization of Life. *Cultural Geographies* 14: 6-28.

- Buck-Morss, Susan. 1995. Envisioning Capital: Political Economy on Display. *Critical Inquiry* 21, no. 2: 434-467.
- Castel, Robert. 2000. The Road to Disaffiliation: Insecure Work and Vulnerable Relationships. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 24, no. 3: 520-535.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2002. *From Manual Workers to Wage Labourers: Transformation of the Social Question*. Translated by Richard Boyd: Transaction Publishers.
- Charbit, Yves. 2002. The Political Failure of an Economic Theory: Physiocracy. *Population* 57, no. 6: 855-883.
- Comaroff, Jean and John Comaroff. 2000. Millennial Capitalism: First Thoughts on a Second Coming. *Public Culture* 12, no. 2: 291-343.
- Cooper, Melinda. 2006. Pre-Emptying Emergence: The Biological Turn in the War on Terror. *Theory, Culture and Society* 23, no. 4: 113-135.
- Cresswell, Tim. 2006. *On the Move. Mobility in Modern Western World*. London: Routledge.
- Dauphinée, Elizabeth and Cristina Masters. 2007. Introduction: Living, Dying, Surviving I. In *The Logics of Biopower and the War on Terror. Living, Dying, Surviving*, ed. Elizabeth Dauphinée and Cristina Masters: vii-xix. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Davis, Mike. 2001. *Late Victorian Holocausts, El Nino Famines and the Making of the Third World*. London: Verso.
- Dean, Mitchell. 1999. *Governmentality. Power and Rule in Modern Society*. London: Sage.
- DEFRA. 2006. *Food Security and the UK: An Evidence and Analysis Paper*. London: DEFRA.
- Denis, Vincent and Vincent Milliot. 2004. Police et identification dans la France des lumières. *Genèses*, 54: 4-27.
- Diken, Bülent and Carsten Bagge Laustsen. 2005. *The Culture of Exception. Sociology Facing the Camp*. London: Routledge.
- Dillon, Michael. 2007. Governing through Contingency: The Security of Biopolitical Governance. *Political Geography* 26, no. 1: 41-47.
- Dillon, Michael and Luis Lobo-Guerrero. 2008. Biopolitics of Security in the 21st Century: An Introduction. *Review of International Studies* 34, no. 2: 265-292.
- Donzelot, Jacques and Colin Gordon. 2005. Comment Gouverner Les Sociétés Libérales? L'Effet Foucault dans le monde anglo-saxon *Esprit*, 'Des sociétés ingouvernables?', no. 319 November: 82-95.
- Dooley, Peter C. 2005. *The Labour Theory of Value*. London: Routledge.
- Edkins, Jenny, Véronique Pin-Fat, and Michael J. Shapiro, eds. 2004. *Sovereign Lives. Power in Global Politics*. London: Routledge.
- Foucault, Michel. 1980. *Power/Knowledge. Selected Interviews & Other Writings 1992-1977*. Edited by Colin Gordon. Brighton: Harvester.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1991. *Remarks on Marx. Conversation with Duccio Trombadori*. Semiotext(E). New York: Columbia University Press.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1991 [1977]. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* London: Penguin.

- \_\_\_\_\_. 2004. *Naissance De La Biopolitique. Cours Au Collège De France, 1978-1979*. 'Hautes Etudes'. Paris: Gallimard/Seuil.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2007. *Security, Territory, Population*. Basingstoke: Palgrave.
- Hunt, Alan. J. 2004. Getting Marx and Foucault into Bed Together! *Journal of Law and Society* 31, no. 4: 592-609.
- Legrand, Stéphane 2004. *L'économie Du Temps Humain. A Propos De Foucault Et Marx*. Accessed 5 January 2008. Available from <http://stl.recherche.univ-lille3.fr/seminaires/philosophie/macherey/Macherey20032004/legrandeconomiedutemps.html>.
- Lemke, Thomas. 2002. Foucault, Governmentality, and Critique. *Rethinking Marxism* 14, no. 3: 49-64.
- LiPuma, E. and T. Koelble. 2005. Cultures of Circulation and the Urban Imaginary: Miami as Example and Exemplar. *Public Culture* 17, no. 1: 153-180.
- LiPuma, Edward and Benjamin Lee. 2004. *Financial Derivatives and the Globalization of Risk*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Looney, Robert. 2003. Darpa's Policy Analysis Market for Intelligence: Outside the Box or Off the Wall? In *Strategic Insights*, II.
- Marx, Karl. 1986 [1867]. *Capital. Volume One*. London: Lawrence and Wishart.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1986 [1893]. *Capital. Volume Two*. London: Lawrence & Wishart.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1993 [1953]. *Grundrisse: Foundations of the Critique of Political Economy*. London: Penguin Classics.
- Mcstay Adams, Thomas. 1991. *Bureaucrats and Beggars. French Social Policy in the Age of Enlightenment*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Melossi, Dario. 2003. In a Peaceful Life': Migration and the Crime of Modernity in Europe/Italy. *Punishment & Society* 5, no. 4: 371.
- Neal, Andrew W. 2006. Foucault in Guantanamo: Towards an Archaeology of the Exception. *Security Dialogue* 37, no. 1: 31-46.
- Negri, Antonio. 1991. *Marx Beyond Marx. Lessons on the Grundrisse*. Translated by Harry Cleaver, Michael Ryan and Maurizio Viano. London: Pluto Press.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2003. The Poor: A Threatening and Indispensable Enemy. In *Global Magazine*, 2.
- Neocleous, Mark. 2008. *Critique of Security*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Noll, Gregor. 2003. Visions of the Exceptional: Legal and Theoretical Issues Raised by Transit Processing Centres and Protection Zones. *European Journal of Migration and Law* 5, no. 3: 303-342.
- Postone, Moishe. 1993. *Time, Labor, and Social Domination. A Reinterpretation of Marx's Critical Theory*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2007. Critical Theory, Philosophy and History. In *Congrès Marx International V*. Paris-Sorbonne.
- Rose, Nikolas. 2001. The Politics of Life Itself. *Theory, Culture and Society* 28, no. 6: 1-30.
- Salter, Mark B. 2008. When the Exception Becomes the Rule: Borders, Sovereignty, and Citizenship. *Citizenship Studies* 12, no. 4: 365 - 380.
- Selby, Jan. 2007. Engaging Foucault: Discourse, Liberal Governance and the Limits of Foucauldian Ir. *International Relations* 21, no. 3: 324-345.

- Sheller, Mimi and John Urry. 2006. The New Mobilities Paradigm. *Environment and Planning A* 38, no. 2: 207-226.
- Urry, John. 2007. *Mobilities*. Cambridge: Polity.
- van Munster, Rens. 2004. The War on Terrorism: When the Exception Becomes the Rule. *International Journal for the Semiotics of Law* 17, no. 2: 141-153.
- Vaughan-Williams, Nick. 2007. The Shooting of Jean Charles De Menezes: New Border Politics? *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political* 32, no. 2: 177-195.
- Watts, Michael. 1983. Hazards and Crisis: A Political Economy of Drought and Famine in Northern Nigeria. *Antipode* 15, no. 1: 24-34.